



MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF
REHABILITATION SERVICES

Opportunities for Independence

OVR/OVRB Public Hearing

Welcome & Public Hearing Purpose

**Dorothy L. Young, Director, Office of
Vocational Rehabilitation for the Blind
(OVRB)**

OVR/OVRB Public Hearing

OVR/OVRB Public Hearing on the following:
Postsecondary education and training policy,
Rescinding and reinstating of the financial
needs analysis,
Implementation of Order of Selection.

Agenda

- I. Postsecondary and Training Policy and Procedure Updates
- II. Reinstatement of the Financial Needs Analysis
- III. Implementation of Order of Selection



MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF
REHABILITATION SERVICES

Opportunities for Independence

OVR/OVRB Public Hearing

**Overview of changes to Postsecondary
Training Policy and Procedures**

**Dr. Jennifer Jackson, Director, Office of
Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR)**

Postsecondary Education and Training Policy and Procedure Updates

Defaulted Student Loans

Added a new section outlining that individuals with defaulted student loans must resolve the default before becoming eligible for federal or VR/VRB assistance. Guidance is provided on steps to defer or forgive loans.

Housing

Individuals may receive assistance with housing when living on campus only. All payments should be issued directly to the institution (less comparable benefits) but only up to the dorm fee listed in the agency Fee Schedule for the institution the individual attends.

Postsecondary Education and Training Policy and Procedure Updates

Transportation - Day Students

The student must reside 60 miles or greater from the institution to receive transportation assistance. (This is one-way.) The cost of travel each semester **cannot** exceed the cost of dorms per semester at the school the individual attends.

Meals

The agency may assist students (on campus and/or off campus) with a meal plan purchased up to the amount allowed in the Fee Schedule or the actual cost of the meal plan, whichever is less. The authorization for meals will be issued directly to the school.

OVR/OVRB Public Meeting

**Reinstatement of the Financial Needs
Analysis**

Dr. Jennifer Jackson, OVR Director

Reinstatement of the Financial Needs Analysis

- Individuals who receive SSI/SSDI are exempt from the financial needs analysis.
- Clients will need to submit a copy of their Form 1040 from their most recent tax return.
- Individuals being claimed as a dependent on someone else's tax return must submit a copy of that person's Form 1040.


Office of Vocational Rehabilitation/Office of Vocational Rehabilitation for the Blind



MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF
REHABILITATION SERVICES

Opportunities for Independence

Reinstatement of the Financial Needs Analysis



Mississippi Department of Rehabilitation Services
Office of Vocational Rehabilitation and Office of Vocational Rehabilitation for the Blind

Financial Needs Analysis *(Individuals Receiving SSI or SSDI are Exempt from Financial Need Analysis)*

Client Name: Date:

SSN:

Section I: Exemption Status

Annual Income Less than Income Exclusion Allowance in Table A (Please select Yes/No from the drop-down)

Will Receive Exempt Services
 ONLY (See list of Exempt on Page 3) (Please select Yes/No from the drop-down)

If the answer to either or both questions is "yes", proceed to Section III

If the answer to both questions is "no", proceed to Section II

Section II: Client/Family Income

If a client is independent (for tax purposes), use the client's and/or Spouse's Income.

1. Adjusted Gross Income

(Enter the figure from Line 11 of Form 1040 of most recent tax return)

2. Exclusion Allowance

(Select family size from the drop-down and the exclusion amount will be entered for you)

3. Applicable Income

Adjusted Gross Income (A) – Exclusion Allowance (B) = C

4. Optional
 (Provide additional details to explain information recorded, any unusual circumstances or any changes in situation, income, etc. Attach supporting documentation if necessary.)

Section III: Determination of Client Participation Rate (See Table B)

Exempt Services (No Client Participation)

1. ASSESSMENT FOR DETERMINATION OF ELIGIBILITY AND VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION NEEDS
2. COUNSELING AND GUIDANCE
3. INFORMATION REFERRAL AND OTHER SERVICES TO SECURE NEEDED SERVICES FROM OTHER AGENCIES IF THOSE SERVICES ARE NOT AVAILABLE UNDER THIS PROGRAM
4. PERSONAL ASSISTANCE SERVICES
5. VEHICLE MODIFICATIONS
6. SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES
7. TRIAL WORK SERVICES, FOLLOW-UP
8. JOB-RELATED SERVICES, INCLUDING JOB SEARCH AND PLACEMENT ASSISTANCE, JOB RETENTION SERVICES, FOLLOW-UP SERVICES, AND FOLLOW-ALONG SERVICES
9. PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES
10. ANY AUXILIARY AID SERVICES
11. ORIENTATION AND MOBILITY SERVICES
12. DIAGNOSTIC TRANSPORTATION FOR THE BLIND
13. ANY SERVICES RELATED TO THE BUSINESS ENTERPRISE PROGRAM (BEP)
14. TUITION AND SUPPLIES FOR PUBLICLY OPERATED COMMUNITY REHABILITATION PROGRAM (CRP) TRAINING
15. EQUIPMENT AND INITIAL STOCKS AND SUPPLIES FOR STATE-OWNED (RANDOLPH-SHEPPARD VENDING STANDS)

NON-EXEMPT SERVICES (REQUIRES CLIENT FINANCIAL PARTICIPATION)

1. HEARING AIDS
2. MAINTENANCE FOR ACADEMIC OR VOCATIONAL TRAINING
3. HOME MODIFICATIONS
4. TRANSPORTATION THAT IS PROVIDED IN CONNECTION WITH THE PROVISION OF REHABILITATION SERVICES RELATED TO ACADEMIC OR VOCATIONAL TRAINING
5. VOCATIONAL AND ACADEMIC TRAINING SERVICES (TUITION, BOOKS, SUPPLIES, FEES, AND TUTORING)
6. OCCUPATIONAL LICENSES, GOODS, TOOLS, AND STOCK (EXCEPT FOR BEP VENDORS)
7. ALL COMPUTERS AND SOFTWARE PURCHASED FOR USE IN BASIC EDUCATION, VOCATIONAL TRAINING, OR COLLEGE LEVEL COURSE WORK
8. POST EMPLOYMENT SERVICES
9. OTHER GOODS AND SERVICES
10. TO THE EXTENT THAT FINANCIAL SUPPORT IS NOT READILY AVAILABLE FROM A SOURCE, SUCH AS, THROUGH HEALTH INSURANCE OF THE INDIVIDUAL OR THROUGH COMPARABLE BENEFITS OTHER THAN THE DESIGNATED STATE UNIT DIAGNOSIS AND TREATMENT OF PHYSICAL AND MENTAL IMPAIRMENTS INCLUDING:

- A. CORRECTIVE SURGERY OR THERAPEUTIC TREATMENT NECESSARY TO CORRECT OR SUBSTANTIALLY MODIFY A PHYSICAL CONDITION THAT CONSTITUTES A SUBSTANTIAL IMPEDIMENT TO EMPLOYMENT, BUT IS OF SUCH A NATURE THAT SUCH CORRECTION OR MODIFICATION MAY REASONABLY BE EXPECTED TO ELIMINATE OR REDUCE SUCH IMPEDIMENT TO EMPLOYMENT WITHIN REASONABLE LENGTH OF TIME
- B. NECESSARY HOSPITALIZATION IN CONNECTION WITH SURGERY OR TREATMENT
- C. PROSTHETIC AND ORTHOTIC DEVICES
- D. DIAGNOSIS AND TREATMENT FOR MENTAL AND EMOTIONAL DISORDERS BY QUALIFIED PERSONNEL WHO MEET STATE LICENSURE LAWS.

Reinstatement of the Financial Needs Analysis

TABLE A - EXCLUSION ALLOWANCE

*BASED ON 285% OF THE 2025 FEDERAL HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES POVERTY GUIDELINES
(ROUNDED TO THE NEAREST WHOLE DOLLAR)*

<i>FAMILY SIZE</i>	<i>INCOME EXCLUSION ALLOWANCE</i>
1	\$44,603
2	\$60,278
3	\$75,953
4	\$91,628
5	\$107,303
6	\$122,978
	FOR EACH ADDITIONAL PERSON, ADD \$14364

TABLE B - CLIENT PARTICIPATION RATE

APPLICABLE INCOME

PARTICIPATION (FROM #3)

RATE(%)

\$100 - 1999	10%
\$2000 - 3999	15%
\$4000 - 5999	20%
\$6000 - 8499	25%
\$8500 - 10999	30%
\$11000 - 13999	35%
\$14000 - 16999	40%
\$17000 - 19999	50%
\$20000 - 24999	60%
\$25000 - 29999	70%
\$30000 - 39999	80%
\$40000 and above	100%



MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF
REHABILITATION SERVICES

Opportunities for Independence

OVR/OVRB Public Meeting

Implementation of Order of Selection

Dr. Jennifer Jackson, OVR Director
Dorothy L. Young, OVRB Director

What is an Order of Selection?

- An order of Selection is a process to follow when an agency has determined there are not enough available resources to serve all individuals with disabilities in the state.
- If a vocational rehabilitation agency is unable to serve all eligible individuals, that state must put into place an Order of Selection.
- An Order of Selection is meant to assess and prioritize an individual's needs and then determine their category of service based upon the assessment findings
- In an Order of Selection, individuals with the most significant disabilities will be selected first for the provision of vocational rehabilitation services.

What is the purpose of an Order of Selection?

- The utilization of the Order of Selection is the appropriate mechanism as defined within the Rehabilitation Act for VR programs to manage the client caseload when there is insufficient funding or staffing to support the demand.
- OVR's Rehabilitation Services Administration will ensure that the Order enforces the intent of the Rehabilitation Act to serve those customers with the Most Significant Disabilities.
- Utilizing the Order will allow OVR/OVRB time to adjust programs and implement additional cost savings measures under the assumption that flat funding may continue.

Federal Regulation (Prohibited Factors)

- Factors that cannot be used in determining order of selection of eligible individuals. An order of selection may not be based on any other factors, including-
- Any duration of residency requirement, provided the individual is present in the State;
- Type of disability;
- Age, sex, race, color, or national origin;
- Source of referral;
- Type of expected employment outcome;
- The need for specific services except those services provided in accordance with 361.36(a)(3)(v), or anticipated cost of services required by an individual; or
- The income level of an individual or an individual's family

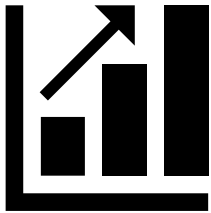
Federal Regulations on Implementing OOS

- 34 CFR Part 361.36 Ability to serve all eligible individuals; order of selection for services (in part):

Steps to Implementation of Order of Selection

OVR/OVRB is projecting a budget shortfall due to:

Increase in Cases



Increase in Case Service Expenditures



Office of Vocational Rehabilitation/Office of Vocational Rehabilitation for the Blind

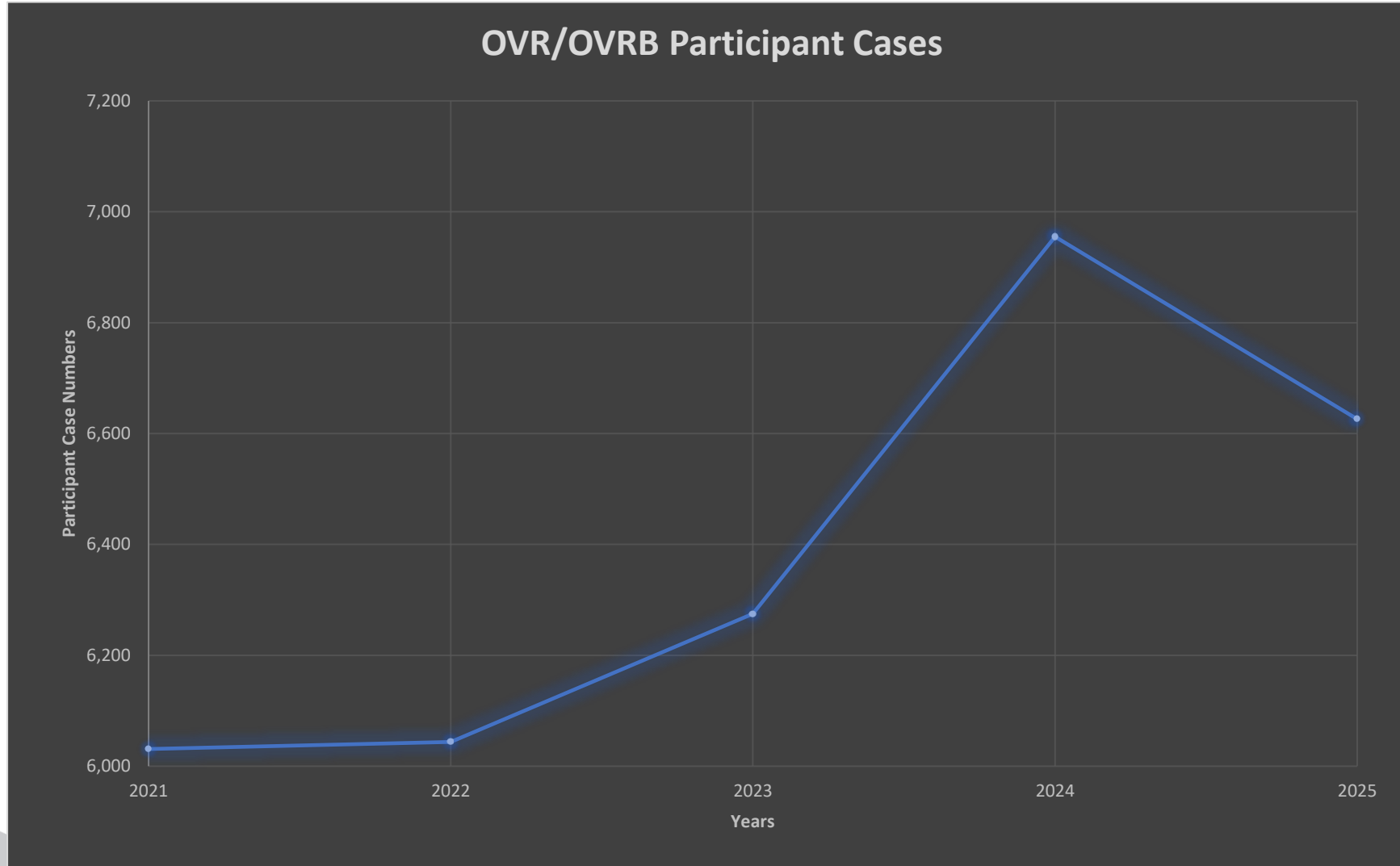


Opportunities for Independence

Steps to Implement OOS

- Agency leadership along with fiscal staff reviewed financial resources, long range fiscal forecasting, personnel projections, etc.
- Based on the above information it was determined that the full range of services can no longer be provided to all eligible consumers and OOS is necessary.
- Priority categories are being reviewed but no definitions were changed.
- The Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) was notified.
- OVR/OVRB Directors consulted with the Technical Assistance Center on Quality Management (TAC-QM). State Rehabilitation Council (SRC), Client Assistance Program (CAP), and MDRS internal leadership
- A special SRC meeting was held on April 30, 2025.
- Public comments are required, and 30 days has been allotted for this.

Implementation of Order of Selection



Office of Vocational Rehabilitation/Office of Vocational Rehabilitation for the Blind



Opportunities for Independence

Implementation of Order of Selection

Steps OVR/OVRB has taken to address the increase in caseloads and expenditures:

- Revised the Postsecondary Education and Training Policy
- Training for staff on eligibility determination.
- Training for staff on the use of comparable benefits.
- Reinstatement of the financial needs analysis
- Decreased travel for staff
- Hiring Freeze
- Reduction of Contractual and Temporary Staff

Office of Vocational Rehabilitation/Office of Vocational Rehabilitation for the Blind

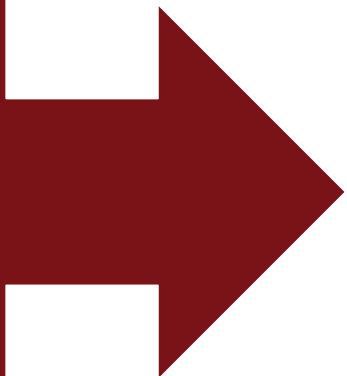


Opportunities for Independence

Implementation of Order of Selection (OOS)

Next Steps: Preparing for OOS

OOS is a tool directing how state VR programs should deliver services when there are not enough resources to serve everyone who is eligible.



- **Waitlist for services**
- **Prioritize those with the most significant disabilities and date of application.**
- **Waitlist does not apply to students receiving Pre-ETS**

Implementation of Order of Selection

Impact to clients and partners

Applicants	Longer wait times for services, especially those clients with no significant disability
Community Rehabilitation Providers	Fewer referrals for services
Mississippi Department of Education and Local School Districts	Increased collaboration with schools to ensure the provision of Pre-ETS
Mississippi Workforce Development Agencies	More collaboration to deliver comparable benefits to clients

Office of Vocational Rehabilitation/Office of Vocational Rehabilitation for the Blind

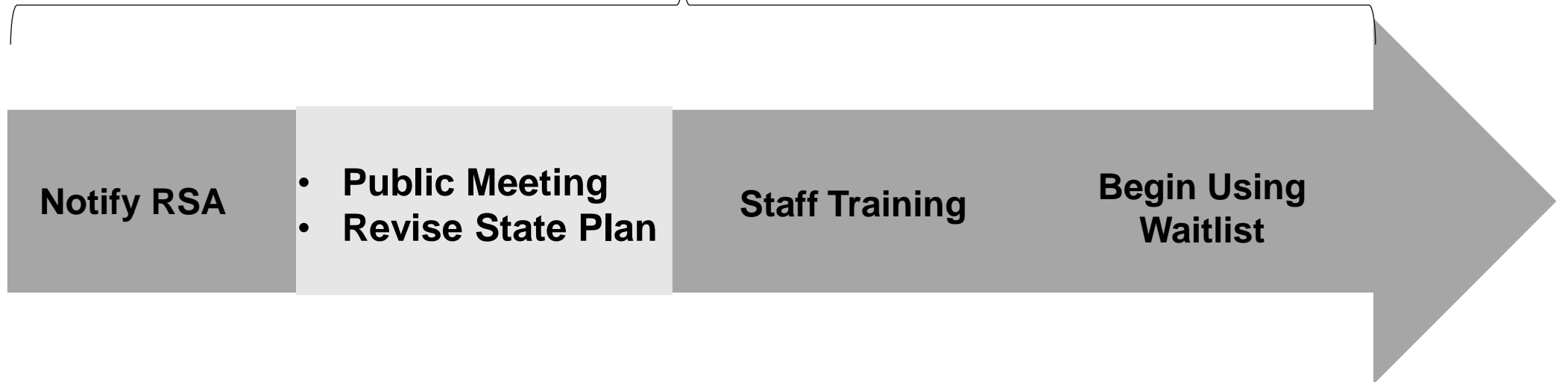


Opportunities for Independence

Implementation of Order of Selection

NEXT STEPS:

Consult with State Rehabilitation Council



Office of Vocational Rehabilitation/Office of Vocational Rehabilitation for the Blind

Implementation of Order of Selection

Client Service Priority Categories

Priority 1

- Has a severe physical or mental impairment that seriously limits three (3) or more functional capacities (such as mobility, communication, self-care, self-direction, interpersonal skills, work tolerance or work skills) in terms of an employment outcome, and
- Will require multiple VR services for an extended period of time.

Priority 2

- Has a severe physical or mental impairment that seriously limits one (1) or two (2) functional capacities in terms of an employment outcome, and
- Will require multiple VR services for an extended period of time.

Priority 3

- Has a physical or mental impairment that results in a substantial impediment to employment and who can benefit, in terms of an employment outcome, from the provision of VR services.

Office of Vocational Rehabilitation/Office of Vocational Rehabilitation for the Blind

Implementation of Order of Selection

What does this mean for clients?

- ☐ All individuals currently receiving services under an approved Individualized Plan for Employment will continue to receive all approved services.
- ☐ **New applicants** will be placed on a waitlist and released when funds are available.
- ☐ All **application and eligibility timelines** will be in effect.
- ☐ **Applicants** will continue to receive any needed assessments, evaluations or other services required to help the person receive an accurate eligibility determination.
- ☐ **Individuals at imminent risk of losing their job** due to a disability-related reason may apply for services to help them stabilize their job.
- ☐ **Students** will be able to continue to receive Pre-Employment Transition Services as long as they receive at least one service prior to being placed on the waitlist.

Office of Vocational Rehabilitation/Office of Vocational Rehabilitation for the Blind



Opportunities for Independence

OVR/OVRB Public Meeting

Closing Remarks

Dr. Jennifer Jackson, OVR Director
Dorothy L. Young, OVRB Director

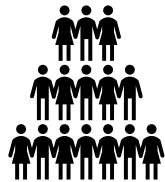
A Commitment to Our Goals



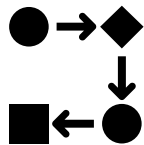
Exceptional service to our clients



Create and Improve Partnerships



Hire and Keep Well-Trained Staff



Ensure Effectiveness of VR Processes so that services can effectively assist clients

Office of Vocational Rehabilitation/Office of Vocational Rehabilitation for the Blind



Opportunities for Independence



THANK YOU



MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF
REHABILITATION SERVICES

Opportunities for Independence